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1905

YALE UNIVERSITY PRIZE POEM

1905

Monograph

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LUX ET VERITAS, AND OTHER SONNETS

BY

GEORGE BREMNER TENNANT

NEW HAVEN
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PREFATORY NOTE

These sonnets received the eighth award of the prize offered by Professor Albert Stanburrough Cook to Yale University for the best unpublished verse, the Committee of Award consisting of Dr. Charles G. Osgood, Professor George H. Palmer, and Mr. Lewis Frank Tooker.

LUX ET VERITAS

All powerful Orb, thou source of life and light,
Save us, who on life's troubled seas embark!
Bend thy strong rays, and drive away the dark,
Nor let our souls, enveloped in the night,
Struggling in doubt, uncertain of the way,
Meet shipwreck in the fog of unbelief.
Let there be light to show the hidden reef—
Light that shall make our night a glorious day:
Then our unclouded eyes may scan the deep,
Mark the true course, shut else from out our sight;
And though with flapping sails we slowly creep
Towards the home port, yet with our bearings right,
Steadfast we'll be, nor let the helmsman sleep.
On to the end we'll go with Truth and Light!

BY THE FIRESIDE

Without, the crooning wind with drifting snow
Swaddles the new-born year in spotless white;
I hear the soft-voiced music of the night
Like a young mother's song, as, bending low
O'er her babe's cot, she bids the voyager go
Into the land of dreams. In my firelight
This picture seems to live; and, waxing bright,
Quickens my pulses with a genial glow.
My book unread lies idle on my knee,
While visions of what might be throng the blaze—
Dramas in which dull pages play no part.
A maid with tender face and loving heart
Flashes a smile amidst the embers' haze
That seems to tell of Love's infinity.

AS TO SOLITUDE

Oft have I learned of solitary joys,
When some sweet bard, becoming Nature's child,
Has breathed in song his love of pathless wild
Or lonely shore, where no discord annoys
The ear attuned to God; where naught destroys
The inward eye's clear vision undefiled,
Which, by some cloud or flower a time beguiled,
Forgets man's wanton world of trifling toys.
But as I picture to myself the shore,
—Its tawny sands, the white-crowned, rolling sea—
I love it none the less, nay, rather more,
Because I feel that Nature's voice to me
Would ring out clearer far than e'er before
Down by the soft-lipped waves, alone—with thee!

TO HIS MISTRESS SLEEPING

O sweet my Love, unlock those slumbrous eyes,
And let those twin bright suns, now set in sleep,
Bring back a radiant day, and swiftly sweep
All clouds of darkness from thy lover's skies.
Look on me! Speak! Why should these gentle sighs
Be lost on thy deaf pillow? See how deep
The haven in those arms, where fast I'll keep
My argosy, my more than priceless prize.
Part those red lips, and with thy dimples make
The smile that fires the tinder in my heart,
Till I could crush thee in my close embrace.
O sweet my Queen, bid drowsy sleep depart,
For time is fleeting with relentless pace:
My arms are waiting, dear one, come, awake!

LEES

The wine is gone; within the glass remains
Naught but the lees. But still the lees are there,
Breathing a subtle fragrance in the air
Of that glad draught that banished all my pains,
And tinged the garish day with roseate glow;
An odor sweet that mounts unto my brain,
And speaks of vanished joys that ne'er again
May live. But since the way of life is so—
Since joys are short, but memories are long—
I linger o'er my wine with loving sips.
Then from my heart there wells a burst of song
That seeks to find expression on my lips;
And when in praise of wine friends sing their glees,
I praise wine too, but thank God for the lees!

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